

aren't any significant differences. Those things are not true.

It matters whether you vote. It's the most important election in, arguably, that you've ever had to vote in, because you've never gotten to vote at a time when you could be completely faithful to your vision, to build a future of your dreams for your children.

So I implore you, show up. Call every friend, family member, co-worker, and halfway interesting-looking stranger you see on the street—[laughter]—between now and November 7th. It's a great chance for these kids here in this church to avoid some of the mistakes and trouble and heartbreak all of us had to live through—to keep making America the beacon of hope in the world. What a great chance it is; what a great responsibility it is.

For me, I'm grateful—I'm grateful that I got to serve. I'm grateful that you stuck with me.

I'm grateful that I got to serve with people like Jim Moran. I'm grateful that when I'm gone, I hope Chuck Robb will be left behind, because he is a rare bird. I want you to remember what I told you. I've known a lot of people in politics; I never saw anybody take more chances to stick up for little people and lost causes. I never, ever, saw anybody do it in a tougher environment. And I think that kind of courage should be rewarded. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. John O. Peterson, pastor, and Rev. Ed Jackson, associate minister, Alfred Street Baptist Church; Reverend Peterson's wife, Joyce; and Jena Roscoe, Associate Director of Public Liaison, White House Office of African-American Outreach and Youth.

Remarks on the Budget and the Legislative Agenda and an Exchange With Reporters

October 30, 2000

The President. Good afternoon. This morning I had planned on coming here this afternoon to share good news about bipartisan progress on the budget. Our team worked all weekend and late, late into the night last night, indeed, into the early morning hours, to fashion a good-faith agreement with compromises on both sides that provided for the largest increased investment ever in the education of our children. We thought we had that agreement.

But instead of honoring it, the Republican leadership came back this afternoon and ripped it apart. Why? Because some special interest lobbyists insisted on it. They've insisted on a provision that would undermine the health and safety of millions of workers.

Six hundred thousand people lose time from work each year because of repetitive stress injuries on the job, injuries that cost American businesses about \$50 billion a year. Our proposal would save these businesses \$9 billion a year and save 300,000 workers the pain and suffering associated with the injuries. That's the cashier at the neighborhood grocery store, the office worker who works on a keyboard 8 hours a

day, the nursing home worker who cares for our seniors.

Once again the Republican leadership has let the whispers of the special interests drown out the voices of the American people. Families should not have to choose between worker safety and their children's education.

We were on the verge of passing a landmark education bill, to hire highly qualified teachers to reduce class size in the early grades, to repair and modernize crumbling schools, to expand after-school programs, invest in teacher quality, and strengthen accountability to turn around failing schools. With the largest student enrollment in history, this budget would have honored our obligation to our children by investing more in our schools and demanding more from them.

If we could get this agreement, it would be a great bipartisan achievement. It was negotiated, until the early morning hours, by those authorized by the leaders in both parties to negotiate the agreement. But the Republican leadership is on the verge of abandoning it to put special interests ahead of the children's education. That is a mistake.

But make no mistake, this is not about a lack of bipartisanship. By working long and hard, we have reached a bipartisan consensus on the education bill. We also have bipartisan agreement on campaign finance reform, hate crimes legislation, raising the minimum wage, the Patients' Bill of Rights—all being blocked by the Republican leadership.

Congress is now 30 days into the new fiscal year without a budget. As I have often said, there is a right and a wrong way to conduct budget negotiations. When we have worked together, we have unfailingly made progress. When there is a genuine spirit of cooperation and compromise, we can accomplish great things for our people.

Last week we came together with a forward-looking bill to fund our veterans and housing programs. Saturday I signed legislation to fund our agriculture programs and provide vital assistance to farmers, ranchers, and rural communities. These bills didn't have everything I wanted. They had some things I opposed. But we can't make the perfect the enemy of good progress. On balance, the bills were good for the American people. They were negotiated in good faith, and I signed them.

There is still more work to be done on education and on other priorities. We need to make headway on strengthening Medicare, providing needed resources to teaching hospitals, rural hospitals, home health agencies, and other providers, not just to HMO's.

I also believe we can have a tax bill that meets the test of fairness to children, seniors, millions of Americans without health coverage, and small business. Instead of meeting that test or even meeting with us, the Republican leadership has crafted their own partisan tax package and passed it on a largely party-line vote.

Again, we have accomplished so much in this session of Congress in a bipartisan fashion. It has been one of the most productive sessions. But the most important legislation is still out there—the education of our children, plus the opportunity to raise the minimum wage, pass the new markets legislation, and provide needed tax relief, as well as to provide fairness to our immigrants and invest in the health care of our people.

I hope we can do this. It's not too late, and we can still work together to make an agreement. But it has to be one for the people and not the special interests.

Thank you.

Q. So what's the next step, sir? The election is a week and a day away. What do you do next?

The President. I don't know. They were up 'til 2:30 in the morning, and I came in this morning, and they said we had an agreement. Senator Harkin called me, absolutely ecstatic about the agreement. We had a good-faith compromise on this rule on labor stress injuries, which would have allowed us to proceed but would have delayed enforcement until the next election, so if they win and they want to reassess the worker safety thing, they'd have the opportunity to do it, but otherwise it would go into effect. It was an honorable compromise. The Republicans and the Democrats agreed on it, and then the Republican leadership blew it up. That's all I can tell you. You know, when you look at what's been done in this bill for education, the idea that the bill would be wrecked over this is unbelievable to me.

Latino and Immigrant Fairness Legislation

Q. Mr. President, anything new on the "Latino Immigration Fairness Act"? Is there any progress, or is that completely stopped?

The President. No—well, we've made some progress, but it's not nearly what we think ought to be done, and we're continuing to work on it. I think, frankly, what happens to it depends on whether we can get agreement on the larger bill. There are lots of provisions in there, and we're working on it.

Legislative Branch Appropriations

Q. [Inaudible]—spending bill?

The President. I haven't decided yet. The bill itself is all right, but there's something that strikes me as a little wrong in taking care of the Congress and the White House when we haven't taken care of the American people. I just haven't decided what to do about it yet.

Published Comments on Impeachment

Q. Mr. President, why do you think Congress, congressional Republicans should apologize to the country about impeachment?

The President. Well, first of all, I have nothing to say about that except I was promised faithfully that that interview would be done—released after the election, and I believed it. And the only thing I can say is, I doubt if you've read the whole interview, or you wouldn't have

asked the question in that way. And I would just urge the American people, if they're hearing all this talk, to read exactly what was said. But I don't think it's appropriate for me to discuss any of this until I'm doing the wrap-up on my administration. Right now I think the American people should be focused on this election.

Oregon Assisted Suicide Law

Q. Mr. President, you've had some discussions today about the Oregon assisted suicide law. Would you sign a tax or spending bill that would block that Oregon law?

The President. Well, you know, I don't support assisted suicide, but the people of Oregon did. My concern, frankly, right now is whether the bill, as written, would have a chilling effect on doctors writing medication for pain relief on terminally ill patients. And I'm concerned, therefore, about the way it's worded.

You don't want to—whatever your opinions about assisted suicide and whether the people ought to have a right to vote on it in a given State, we certainly don't want to do anything that would in any way undermine the willingness of physicians to write pain relief medication for fear they'll later be prosecuted if the patient dies.

So I'm a little—I'm concerned about that. And I know Senator Wyden is filibustering the bill, and maybe we'll work that out, too, before this is over. I hope we can.

U.S.S. Cole Investigation

Q. Do you now believe that Yemen will give American investigators all the access they need to witnesses and suspects in the U.S.S. *Cole* investigation, sir?

The President. I hope so. They were just great, the Yemenis were, in the beginning of this, the first phase of this work. And I think—there have been difficulties now, I think not because they don't want to find out who did it but perhaps because they are worried about having America deploy more resources in Yemen to do the investigation than they are. I think they feel comfortable that they can do it.

But what I argued to President Salih was that we ought to have a genuine joint investigation, that we have FBI people working with folks

all over the world, in all different kinds of countries. When the Embassies were blown up in Africa, in both the nations involved, Kenya and Tanzania, we worked very closely with the local law enforcement officials, and we conducted a genuine joint operation.

We had quite a long discussion about it, the President and I did, on Saturday, I believe. And I hope that we can work it out, because I do believe that they want to know who did it, and I know that we have to find out who did it. There are some promising leads out there. We need to get on it as quickly as possible, because the problem in these things is that the trail can get cold. So all I can tell you is we're working very hard, and I'm quite hopeful.

President's Travel Plans

Q. Mr. President, if you go to California, which other States do you intend to visit during the last days of the campaign?

The President. Well, I'm not sure yet. We're working on a number of different options, and I want to do whatever will be most helpful. I know I'll go back to New York once. But I don't know what else we're going to do. We're working it out, and I think, really, since I'm not involved in the day-to-day operations, don't have access to the latest polls and all that, I—except indirectly—I think that that's a call others have to make. But we'll make a decision and do the best we can.

Q. Mr. President—

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—going to do?*

The President. Finish the business here. That's the most important thing. We've got to finish our business here. You know, I'm just sure that we have bipartisan agreement—not only on the Education/Labor bill but in these other areas we can get it, if the pressure from the interest groups on the leadership of the majority party in Congress don't thwart it. So we've just got to keep working at it, and that's what I intend to do.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:52 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Ali Abdallah Salih of Yemen.